

A thick black L-shaped frame surrounds the text. It starts at the top left, goes right, then down, then right again at the bottom right.

U när i so, es geit ume Dialäkt hie: Quotative variation in Bernese Swiss German

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Language variation and change, and English quotatives

One of the most intensively studied variable phenomena in English. LVC techniques have enabled:

- Systematic examination of linguistic and social constraints on variation, addressing the embedding problem (Weinreich, Labov and Herzog 1968)
- Systematic examination of innovative variants relative to other competing variants – where in the grammar innovative forms enter, and how they encroach further, addressing the transition problem (WL&H);
- Enabled comparative sociolinguistic analysis – considering the diffusion, embedding and localisation of variability across a number of speech communities simultaneously;

Language variation and change, and English quotatives

- Expanded our understanding of variation and change, methodologically and theoretically, at the nexus of grammar, discourse-pragmatics and lexis;
- Enabled us, subsequent to the advent of variationist methods, to track an innovation from its very early days to a point where, in some varieties, it is the dominant form;
- Enabled us, thanks to the rapidity of the change, to consider real-time as well as apparent time change, and witness the trajectory of the change across the lifespan;
- Sensitised us to the emergence of novel, localised quotative forms.

Beyond English...

- Few prominent **variationist** studies of the quotative systems of languages other than English
 - Palacios Martinez 2014 for Spanish;
 - Cheshire and Secova (fc) for French
- Plenty of **qualitative** studies, studies examining discourse markers which, among functions can serve as quotative markers, studies in Conversation analysis, etc;
 - But these are not able to address, to the same extent, the embedding and transition questions central to the understanding of change, nor facilitate comparability across studies, nor track change through the lifespan, etc.

Aim

To present a pilot study of a quantitative analysis of quotatives in German – a language that has seen much qualitative but little/no? quantitative work.

1. German and Swiss German quotatives
2. The pilot study
3. Results and Interpretation

German quotatives

- No(?) quantitative studies so far...
- *Qualitative* studies on:
 - Use of verbs (say, think, ask...)
 - Use of the adverb 'so'
- Most studies set in multi-ethnic communities

German quotatives: ‚so‘

Andrea Golato (2000): An innovative German quotative for reporting on embodied action: Und ich so/und er so ‘*and I’m like /and he’s like*’:

- „so“ is the German equivalent to English *be like*;
- Only used in storytelling situations;
- „so“ as an enactment of performance, as it also allows the use of voiced sound effects, gestures and facial expressions (traditional quotative verbs not used);
- „so“ is usually preceded by a subject (ich *I*, er *he*, sie *she*, wir *we*) and followed by a very short break.

German quotatives: ‚so‘

Christine Merzluft (2014): Quotativkonstruktionen mit so in Mädchentelefonaten:

- „so“ is a marker of youth language;
- „so“ as scenic marker of performance, allows mimesis;
- „so“ accented and unaccented but close to the main focus of the sentence;
- „so“ often without verb, potential to replace the verb.

German quotatives: ‚so‘

Heike Wiese (2011): ‘So’ as a focus marker in German:

- „so“ is the German equivalent to English *so*, *such*;
- „so“ is unaccented but stands adjacent to the expression with the main sentence stress;
- „so“ is used in focus-marking:
 - Semantically bleached and reduced to its pragmatic/information-structural function as a marker of the focus

German quotatives: ‚so‘

Studies of multi-ethnic communities:

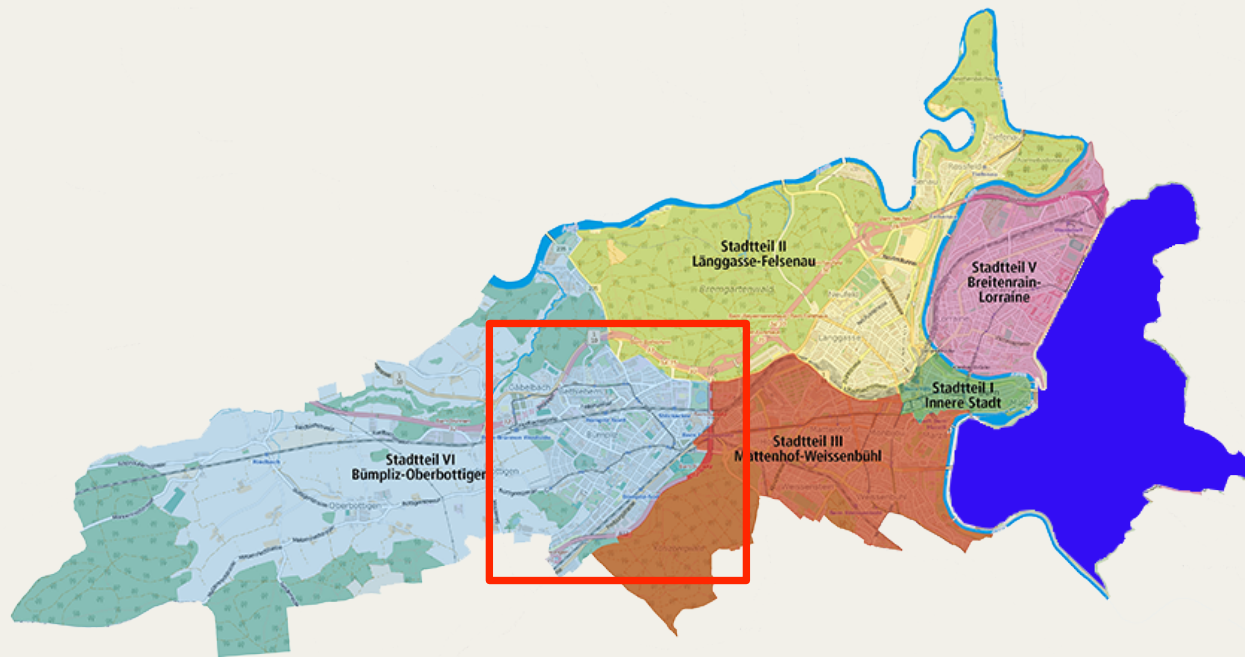
- Heike Wiese (2008): „ich mag so wasserpfeifeladen“: The interaction of grammar and information structure in Kiezdeutsch;
- Stefanie Jannedy (2010): The usage and distribution of so in spontaneous Berlin Kiezdeutsch.

Quotatives in Swiss German

- No systematic qualitative or quantitative research
- Very few studies on ethnolectal Swiss German
 - Natalia Gubko (2014): Ethnolektales Sprechen in Deutschland, der Schweiz und Russland;
 - Coincidental short mentions of quotatives with the quotative marker „so“, one of many markers of ethnolectal (youth) Swiss German.

The Pilot Study: Setting and Variables

- Where?: Multi-ethnic community in the relatively disadvantaged western periphery of the city of Bern
- Who?: 26 speakers between 17 and 24, 13 male, 13 female
- How?: Recordings of group interviews (2 speakers)



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Constraints on variation

- Social variables:
 - **Gender** – Male vs. Female
 - **Ethnicity** – Swiss vs. with migration background

Constraints on variation

■ Linguistic Variables

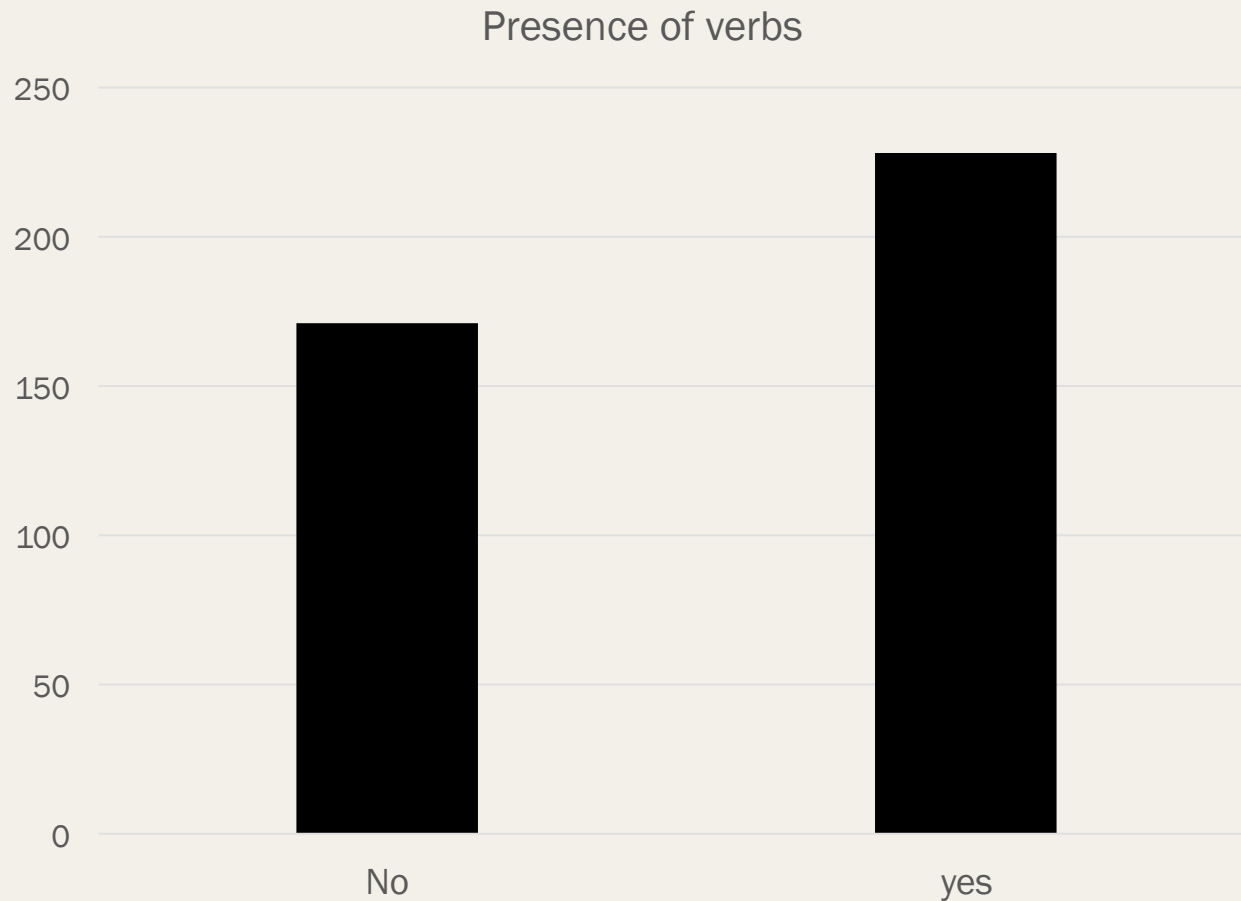
- *Presence of verb* – yes or no
- *Kind of verb* – *säge, denke..* (say, think...)
- *Tense of verb* - present vs. perfect
- *Presence of subject* – 1st Sing., 2nd Sing..
- *Presence of “so”* – yes or no
- *Position of “so”* – Subj.+so, So+Verb...
- *Use of adverbs* – *när, immer...*
- *Type of quote* – Normal, Mimesis, Noise

→ 399 tokens

Constraints on variation: Verb use

- No verb used:
 - När ig so, 'nei' (then I [so], 'no')
- With verb
 - När **seisch**, so 'ja, okay' (then you say [so], 'yes, okay')
 - Different verbs possible: dänke (think), säge (say), finge (find), frage (ask)...
 - När dänksch so, 'nei' (then you think [so], 'no')
 - När hei si mi gfragt 'how much is this' (and then they asked me, 'how much is this')

Constraints on variation: Presence of verbs



Constraints on variation: Use of Subjects

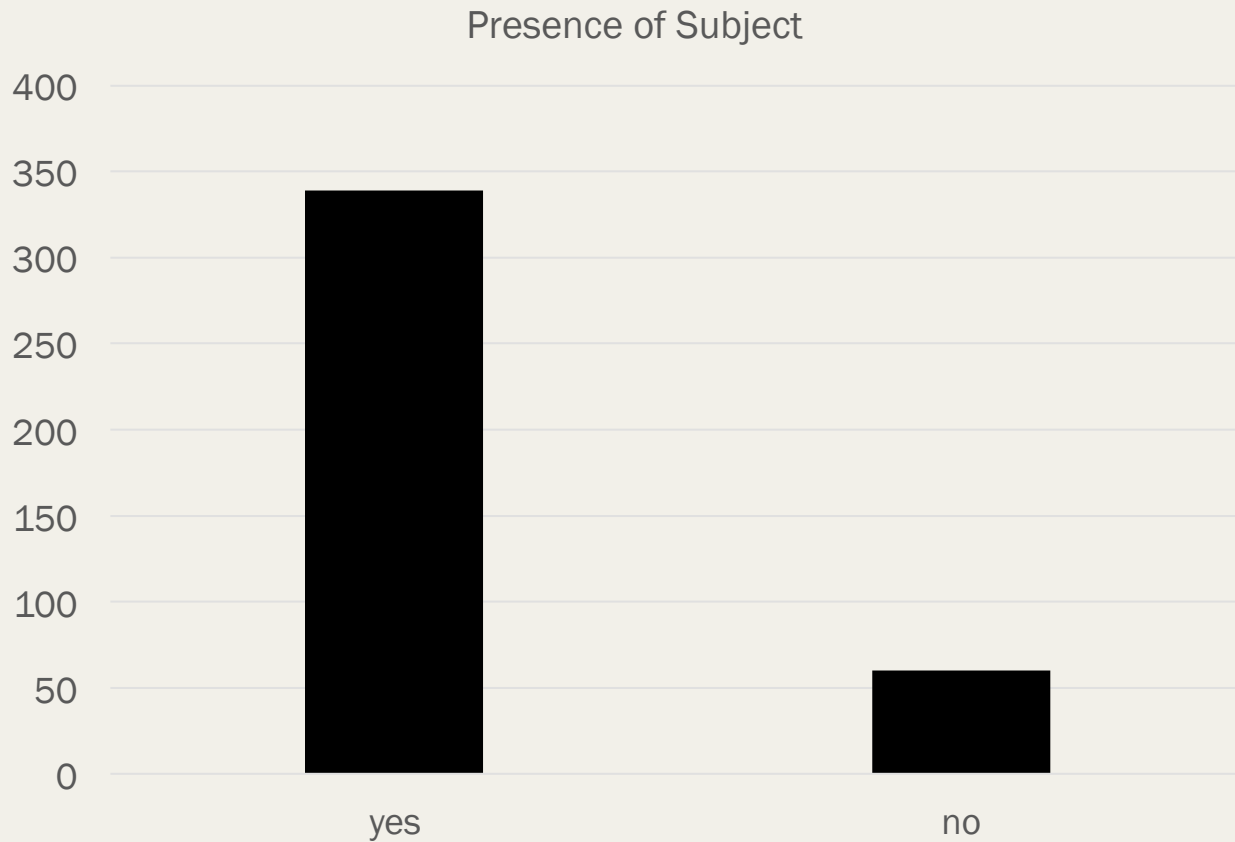
■ Subject present:

- När **ig** so, 'ja' (then I [so] [no verb], 'yes')
- När het **si** gseit, 'i schicke dr dr link' (then she said, 'I'll send you the link')

■ Subject absent:

- När so 'ja mer hei gredet' (then [so] [no verb], 'yes, we talked')
- När chunnt immer, 'ja, aber weisch' (then always comes, 'yes, but you know')

Constraints on variation: Use of Subjects



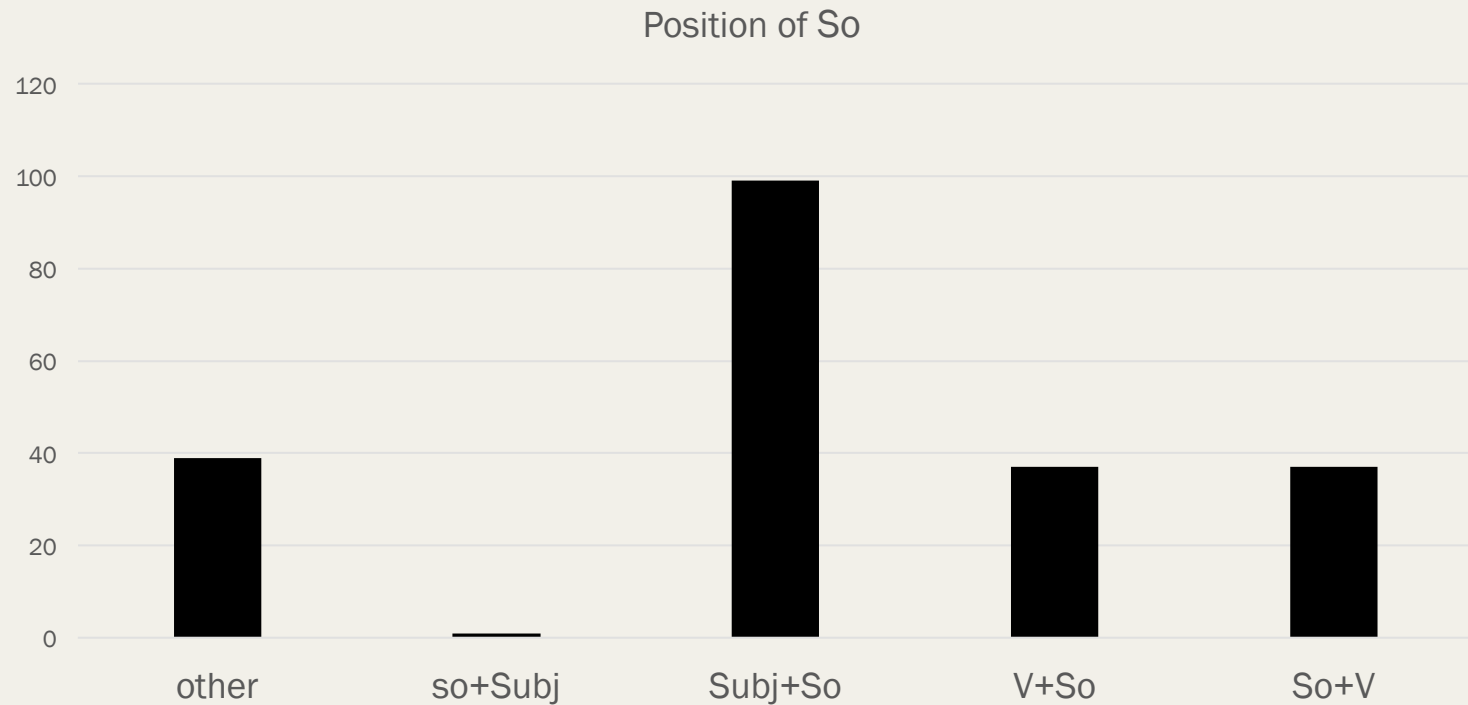
Constraints on variation: Presence of “so”

- “So” present
 - *Ig so, ‘okay’* (I [no verb] [so], ‘okay’)
- “So absent”
 - *Und när hani gseit, ‘nei ire KITA’* (and then I said, ‘no, in a day care’)
- Different possible positions of “so”
 - *Subj. + So – ig so ‘okay’* (I [no verb] [so], ‘okay’)
 - *So+Verb – när hani so gseit ‘ja’* (then I said [so], ‘yes’)
 - *Verb+So – är isch so ‘ciao ciao’* (he is [so], ‘ciao, ciao’)
 - *Other – när so ‘ja mer hei gredet’* (then [so], ‘yes, we talked’)

Constraints on variation: Presence of “so”



Constraints on variation: Position of "so"



Zooming in on the use of “so”

- Rbrul analysis
 - Linguistic factors
 - Social factors
 - Random intercept - Speaker
- Not significant:
 - Type of quote ($p = 0.61$)
 - Use of adverbs ($p = 0.088$)

“So” and the use of verbs

Presence of verb	tokens	logodds	% so	Factor weights
No	171	1.031	77.2	0.737
Yes	228	-1.031	34.6	0.263

$p < .001$

→ “So” is more likely if no verb is used

“So” and tense of verbs

Tense	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weight
Present	110	0.326	39.1	0.581
Perfect	118	-0.326	30.5	0.419

$$p = .0469$$

→ “so” is more likely with present tense verbs (if a verb is used)

“So” and the use of subjects

Subject	tokens	Log-odds	% so use	Factor weights
1 st Sing.	107	1.110	72.9	0.752
No Subject	60	0.187	51.7	0.547
3 rd Sing.	151	0.028	47.7	0.507
1 st Pl.	13	-0.034	46.4	0.492
2 nd Sing. & Pl.	19	-0.198	42.1	0.451
Personal Names	11	-0.439	36.4	0.392
3 rd Plural	38	-0.653	31.6	0.342

$p < .001$

→ “So” is favoured with 1st Sing, no Subjects, and 3rd Singular

Social distribution: Gender

Gender	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
Female	314	0.368	56.4	0.591
Male	85	-0.368	40.0	0.409

$$p = .0426$$

→ Female speakers use "so" significantly more than male speakers

Social distribution: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
Swiss	306	0.474	57.8	0.616
With a migration background	93	-0.474	36.6	0.384

$p = .0159$

→ **Swiss speakers use “so” significantly more than speakers with a migration background**

Conclusion

- Just a first step into variationist analyses of Swiss German quotatives
- Not straightforward!
 - Optionality of quotative markers, quotative verb and subject!

Conclusion

BUT:

Using variationist techniques, we have begun to discover a little more about:

- the grammar of quotatives,
- the social and linguistic embedding of variation
- comparability with the patterning of innovative quotatives in English
 - The use of quotative 'so' is more likely to be female, and to be found in first person contexts, typical of English 'be like' in its early stages (Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999);
 - But there is no significant effect of quote content, and 'so' is also now common in 3rd person singular contexts, more typical of later stage development;
- Interesting local ethnic patterning: Swiss (against the stereotype)

Appendix

$p=.16$

Gender	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
Female	314	0.275	35.7	0.568
Male	85	-0.275	24.7	0.432

$p=.058$

Ethnicity	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
Swiss	306	0.406	33.6	0.6
With a migration background	93	-0.406	22.6	0.4

Use of verbs (without so)

Gender	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
Male	85	0.311	49.4	0.577
Female	314	-0.312	34.1	0.432

p=.0307

Ethnicity	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
With a migration background	93	0.387	46.2	0.596
Swiss	306	-0.387	34.6	0.404

Crosstabs

Gender	No	Yes
Female	141	173
Male	30	55
Total	171	228

Ethnicity	No	Yes
Migration background	37	56
Swiss	134	172
Total	171	228

Verb of quotation

Gender	Zero	other	dänke	finge	frage	säge	sein	total
Female	141	29	32	1	8	102	1	314
Male	30	7	1	2	0	41	4	85
Total	171	36	33	3	8	143	5	399

Gender	Zero	other	dänke	finge	frage	säge	sein	total
Migration	37	11	3	0	2	39	1	93
Swiss	134	25	30	3	6	104	4	306
Total	171	36	33	3	8	143	5	399

- *Verb of quotation and the use of so (no random intercept used here)*

■ $p < .001$

Verb of quotation	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
sein	5	13.598	100	>0.999
No verb	171	-0.749	77.2	0.321
dänke	33	-0.829	75.8	0.304
other	36	-2.191	44.4	0.101
finge	3	-3.253	33.3	0.065
säge	143	-3.253	21.7	0.037
frage	8	-3.914	12.5	0.02

■ Quotation type (Main verb = säge, frage, danke) (say, ask, think)

Gender	Main Verb	När+Subj	Other verbs	Sein+So	Subj+So	Zero	total
Female	142	4	30	1	112	26	314
Male	42	0	9	4	21	9	85
Total	184	4	39	5	133	34	399

Ethnicity	Main Verb	När+Subj	Other verbs	Sein+So	Subj+So	Zero	total
Migration	44	1	11	1	21	15	93
Swiss	140	3	28	4	112	19	306
Total	184	4	39	5	133	34	399

■ The use of a main verb, is not gendered, or used differently by the ethnic groups
 $p=.791$

Gender	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
Male	85	0.056	49.4	0.577
Female	314	-0.056	45.2	0.486

$p=.298$

Ethnicity	Tokens	Log-odds	% so	Factor weights
Migration	93	0.259	47.3	0.564
Swiss	306	-0.259	45.8	0.436

Gender	other	No so	So+V	Subj+So	V+So	total
Female	33	135	32	87	27	314
Male	7	51	5	12	10	85
Total	40	186	37	99	37	399

Ethnicity	other	No so	So+V	Subj+So	V+So	total
Migration	7	58	5	15	8	93
Swiss	33	128	32	84	29	306
Total	40	186	37	99	37	399

Gender	other	de	immer	när	No adverb	total
Female	21	21	9	137	126	314
Male	8	0	2	16	59	85
Total	29	21	11	153	185	399

Ethnicity	other	de	immer	när	No adverb	total
Migration	6	1	7	32	47	93
Swiss	23	20	4	121	138	306
Total	29	21	11	153	185	399

